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SENSITIVE
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STATE PASS USTR, NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR, STATE FOR NEA/FO
AND IPA; EEB

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [KWBG](#) [WTRO](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: PA FORMALLY REQUESTS OBSERVER STATUS AT WTO
MINISTERIAL, BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS WITH USTR

REF: A. GENEVA 950
[1](#)B. GENEVA 961

[1](#)1. (SBU) Senior Palestinian Authority officials tell us that the PA formally requested observer status at the November 30 Ministerial Conference in a November 4 letter from PA Ambassador Khraishi to WTO CG Chairman Ambassador Matus in Geneva. The letter was delivered before the November 5 deadline for submissions to the General Council agenda. It notes that the request for observer status at the Ministerial applies in the event that the General Council does not decide on the PA's earlier request for formal observer status ahead of the Ministerial. The text of the PA's letter to Ambassador Matus follows in paragraph 3.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Separately, PA Minister of National Economy Hasan Abu-Libdeh sent a letter to USTR Ambassador Ron Kirk proposing immediate bilateral consultations in Washington or Ramallah in advance of the November Ministerial. The text of Abu-Libdeh's letter to Ambassador Kirk is in paragraph 4.

[1](#)3. (U) Begin text of Ambassador Khraishi letter to Ambassador Matus:

Excellency:

In view of the ongoing deliberations among members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding my Government's pending request for observer status in the General Council and its subsidiary bodies, circulated on October 2 as contained in document (WT/L/770), and without prejudice to the continue priority accorded to that request, I herewith, on behalf of Palestine, have the honour to request for admission as an observer in the Ministerial Conference of the WTO. This request only applies in the event that the General Council does not find itself in a position to decide on our aforementioned request for observer status in the General Council and its subsidiary bodies in time to allow for Palestinian participation in the Seventh Session of the Ministerial Conference to be held in Geneva.

Dr. Ibrahim Khraishi
Ambassador, Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the UN
and other International Organizations

End text.

[1](#)3. (U) Begin text of Minister Abu-Libdeh letter to Ambassador Kirk:

Your Excellency:

On behalf of the Palestinian National Authority, I would like

to thank you and the whole of the USTR team for your serious engagement on our application for observer status. We especially appreciate the consultations held between our delegation and yours at the U.S. Mission in Geneva.

In this regard, I would like to inform you that Palestine remains committed to securing observer status in the WTO General Council and its subsidiary bodies, with the goal of applying for accession in the near future. We believe that WTO observership and subsequent membership are critical for our own internal reform and state building efforts as well as for ensuring that the prospective Palestinian state is able to provide opportunities for future generations, and to be a part of the global trading community in order to promote stability and growth by being part of and adhering to the rules-based multilateral trading system, embodied in the WTO agreements.

We appreciate the concerns that your delegation has raised in our discussions both in Geneva as well as Jerusalem, and would like to inform you that we are prepared to answer them in full. In this regard, we would like to propose immediate bilateral consultations in advance of the November Ministerial either in Palestine, or in Washington DC. We are ready for these consultations at anytime and believe it would be an opportune occasion to get to know each other, and to start what we hope to be a long and fruitful relationship and learning experience for both our peoples.

Given that consensus has not been reached on our application for observer in the General Council, I have written to Ambassador Matus, Chairman of the General Council, to ask for

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ad hoc observership status for the 7th WTO Ministerial, to be held November 2009. I trust we can count on your full support for this request, as we work together aggressively to secure U.S. support for our goal of observer status in the General Council.

I thank you again for your understanding and cooperation and look forward to hearing from you on the start of our bilateral consultations.

Accept, Your Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

Hasan Abu-Libdeh
Minister

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